

Boston still further worth at—from \$5. to 5.50, per ton.

Now, he took it for granted that any man of business—any practical man at all, who commenced any new work—any new business whatever, if he knew he was to encounter competition, must attract business by putting his goods, or whatever it might be at a low price. He [Mr. D.] was not a merchant, only a plain farmer, but he knew that was the consideration which controlled merchants. If a merchant sets up business, and finds competition, he puts his articles down to the lowest price; and that was precisely the consideration which Mr. Swann says, governed the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road company, and which he knew governed the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal company, and the object of reducing their prices was to enable them to compete with their rivals.

So much for the reduction of freight and tolls upon the public works, which had been the subject out of this body, of exciting such a degree of suspicion and jealousy one with the other. It was the necessity of the case that caused it. Several weeks ago he received a letter from a very intelligent merchant of the City of New York, but originally from the State of Maryland, in which he asked him the question, what was the prospect of introducing Cumberland coal into their markets? That gentleman spoke of the advantages of that coal, and stated that it was preferred for the use of steamers and manufacturers, but said that they would have to introduce it at very low rates to compete with English and Welch coals in New York. English coal was about six dollars per ton; and Pictou coal was about the same price. They would introduce the coal upon such terms as would meet this rivalry, or their works would be unproductive. He thought this a consideration which should control both companies.

Before he proceeded any further, he thought it due to himself—occupying a position between all parties; that he should do justice to a gentleman who was absent, and not here to defend himself, who had been grossly wronged by remarks made by the gentleman from Carroll county, [Mr. Brown.] He alluded to Mr. Fisk, chief engineer of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal company. Mr. Fisk entered the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal company a mere boy, and as a rodman. By his talent, integrity, and fidelity to his duty, he had risen, step by step, into the position he now occupied. Indeed, he had heard gentleman beyond the limits of the State say that they considered him at the head of canal engineers in the United States.

Mr. BROWN stated, that he said distinctly that he did not wish to say any thing calculated to injure Mr. Fisk; but it was a matter of history, of public record, that that gentleman most certainly made his estimates a great deal too low, and upon those estimates the Legislature of the State got into debt.

Mr. DAVIS ventured to take issue with the gentleman upon the point of history. The first

appropriation of any amount—(two millions of dollars)—to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, was made in 1834, at which time Mr. Fisk was a mere boy.

Mr. BROWN. Begin in 1835.

Mr. DAVIS said, that the law of 1835 was passed before Mr. Fisk had advanced to the position which he now occupied, and he hoped the gentleman from Carroll would receive this as a correction. He had not the documents here, but he had examined the estimates carefully, and he had yet to see that Mr. Fisk had been in error.

Mr. BROWN. Will the gentleman inform me who was the engineer in 1835—who made the estimates?

Mr. DAVIS replied that Mr. Gwyn was Mr. Fisk's predecessor. He knew, however, that in 1837, he found the name of Mr. Fisk as an assistant or resident engineer; having charge of a section of work, under the control of the Chief Engineer. This, he thought was a sufficient answer to the gentleman. He had not the documents here, because he did not expect to have had to meet this question; but he desired to do justice Mr. Fisk, who he knew had been charged with this thing before. He was satisfied, that any gentleman, after a careful examination of the facts, would come to the conclusion that Mr. Fisk had not erred, and that he had brought his work out, nearly within the estimates made.

There was this error, an error which every fair-minded man would receive as one which should be allowed to be corrected. It was known that in 1836, '37, during the progress of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, estimates were made upon a certain amount of wages to hands, and upon a certain price for provisions. These were important elements in all estimates of work to be done. It was very well known it was a matter of history, that before the next twelve months rolled round, the competition and excitement for internal improvements, produced such a competition for hands that the prices went up from thirty-three and a third to fifty per cent., and that provisions increased in a corresponding degree. Would not every fair-minded gentleman allow an error to be corrected under such circumstances as these. It was satisfactory to his mind that there had been no error of calculation on the part of Mr. Fisk, other than what could be satisfactorily accounted for.

Now, to the proposition under consideration, to delegate this power to agents, he objected to it, but not because the humble individual who stood before them might be turned out of the place he held by it, and some one else put in his place. He was always ready to be turned out of an office when others could be found more willing and capable of performing its duties than himself. He objected to it upon principle, and because he believed the whole theory to be wrong. He thought it was a theory which history would prove had been destructive. He was opposed to boards of directors, to boards of control, and to every thing of that kind, and he would inform gentlemen who had not examined the subject, that it was a little more difficult than they im-